

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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The Quarterly Sunday School Conference of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Church

EMMA RISSE

The history of the Quarterly Sunday School Conference of the Pennsylvania Church, Hesston, Kansas, has been unique and interesting. As far as is known it was the first in the Mennonite Church. The Sunday School had enjoyed a steady growth from its beginning in 1887 but the need for something more to help stabilize, spiritualize and energize it became apparent. The superintendent, Bro. Noah Eby, had a conviction that some sort of Sunday School meeting would help meet this need, and, after prayer and deliberation with other leaders, planned a program for the first meeting, June 24, 1900. Only a few remain who were at that first meeting, but the inspiration of it has never been forgotten. Following is the program:

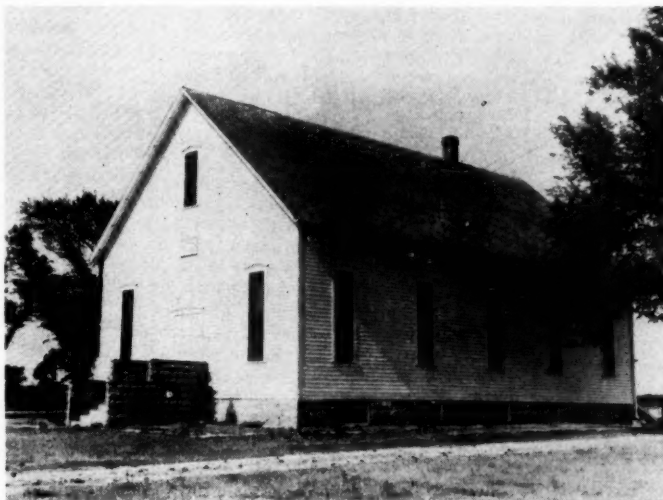
- I. What are Absolutely Necessary Qualifications for a Successful Sunday School Teacher?
- II. What are the Best Methods of Studying the Sunday School Lesson?
- III. Would it Be to the Welfare of our Sunday School to Make House-to-House Visitations?
- IV. What is the Duty of the Class to the Teacher?
- V. Proper Use and Abuse of Lesson Helps.
- VI. Would it Be a Benefit to our Sunday School to have a Mission Class?

Space forbids a report of these discussions but special emphasis was given to early and thorough lesson preparation, getting the connecting links, use of commentaries, and making the spiritual applications.

That first program would seem quite simple and elementary now, but the spirit, devotion, earnestness and interest of speakers and listeners made it rich in

blessing and helpfulness. It was decided to continue these meetings in a quarterly conference. A simple organization followed, with a moderator elected for the next meeting and a program committee chosen. In later years the moderator has appointed two others to assist him as a program committee. This committee also chooses a secretary and a chorister. A record has been kept of all meetings.

The earlier meetings had from four to seven topics, one to three speakers for each topic, followed by open discussion and then a question box. There were *always* open discussions and *always* (but twice) questions in the box. The meet-



The Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, southeast of Hesston, Kansas, so-called because the early settlers of the community came from Pennsylvania. This church has been the meeting place of the Quarterly Sunday School Conference referred to in the accompanying article.

ings lasted from two to three hours. Interest was good and no one seemed weary.

July 7, 1929, featured a memorial service for two long-time ministers of the congregation, Bishop T. M. Erb and J. M. R. Weaver:

- I. Early History of their Lives.
- II. Transforming Power of Christ in their Lives.
- III. Blessings Received from their Ministry.
- IV. Our Increased Responsibility.

Another meeting that was different was in the nature of a Harvest Home meeting, Sunday P. M., Sept. 24, 1944; and still another, a Watch-night service, Dec. 31, 1944, beginning at 9:30 and closing after 12:00. But outstanding, no doubt,

(Continued on next page)

M. S. Steiner Visited Kansas Churches

MELVIN GINGERICH

During the summers of 1889 and 1890 M. S. Steiner was employed by the Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana, to sell Bibles and other books and to take subscriptions for the publications of the company. (See the "Brief Biography of M. S. Steiner", by John S. Umble, in the March, 1942, Mennonite Historical Bulletin.)

In the latter part of this first season, Steiner visited churches in Kansas, including those of the Amish Mennonites, the Old Mennonites, and the Russian Mennonites. While on this trip, he recorded interesting facts, observations, and conversations. Below are the notes from his memorandum book referring to the Old Mennonite and Amish Mennonite churches he visited in Kansas in September, 1889.

The West Liberty Mennonite church in McPherson Co., Kans. Bish. B. F. Hamilton, from Peabody, Kans., has this church in charge. S. C. Miller, Monitor, P. O., McPherson Co., Kan. and Mr. Coopridge, Groveland, McPherson Co., are the ministers. J. C. Hershberger, Monitor, McPherson Co., Kan.,

is the deacon. There are at present 46 members and a flourishing S. S. consisting of 80 scholars average. The S. S. is conducted in both English and German language. The prominent S. S. leaders are R. C. Yoder, John Slabach, Henry Hostettler (chorister) and Chancy Hostettler, a bright young member. There is to be expected one of our *shining* western churches. The members are wide awake and much interested in the progress of the church in general. (Thomas Coopridge, teacher, Groveland, is a fine young man.)

There is a small Amish church within 1 mi. of our West Liberty church. They are yet of the J. K. Yoder faith and strictly adhere to it. Their main minister is S. J. Swartzendruber, Monitor, McPherson Co., Kan. One of the principle

members is B. B. Miller, also John Gunden; both get their mail at Monitor. They have a membership of 40 members and a summer S.S. These may accept of your quarterlies.

Churches in Harvey Co. Kans. The Amish Men. Church has a membership of 22. The minister is D. J. Zook. These brethren have no separate S.S. but have their school with the Mennonites nearby. Zook also has charge of a small congregation of 18 members near Hutchinson. The ministers of the Amer. Mennonite is David Weaver, Jacob Erb, Deacon.

Proceedings of the Kansas Semi-annual Conference. The exercises were opened Friday morning Sept. 28 by singing the hymns No. 18 Eng. and No. 77 Ger. after which John 17 was read and exhortations made by Bish. Hamilton from the same. Prayer was then offered, after which admonition and suggestions on certain church rules with regard to nonconformity. The late Farmers Alliance society was looked upon as being contrary to Gods Word. Second, Brethren in the church should assist more freely in the Spiritual Work. We should pray more for each other. Naturally men are wise and make gain, but how is it spiritually. I wish we could make more progress in this work, brethren and sisters. Third, the duty of the ministers was put before them, that they should speak the pure word of God. His opinion is that we should speak and have as little to do with the worldly people as possible.

QUARTERLY S. S. CONFERENCE

(Continued from preceding page)

was the celebration of the one hundredth quarterly meeting, held Dec. 27, 1925:
Afternoon Session—

I. A History of the Pennsylvania Congregation.

II. A History of our Quarterly Sunday School Conference.

III. Workers who Have Gone Out from the Pennsylvania Congregation.

IV. A Roll Call—"Where Are the Nine?"
Evening Session—

I. Memories and Experiences of Early Conference Days. (Sixteen speakers were assigned to this, followed by open response.)

II. Reading of Letters from Former Superintendents and Workers.

III. The Significance of the Historical Facts of This Program.

Interesting features of this meeting were: the same moderator as at the first meeting; the same quartet singing the same song, "Our Blessed Sunday School"; and the many who had returned to enjoy and take part in the services.

The meeting of June 12, 1912, merits special mention for, long after, it was learned that Vachel Lindsay had been present. His identity unknown, he had worked as a harvest hand a mile from the church and was present at that service. Of the service he says, "I have never heard

better discourses on the distinctions between the four Gospels. The men who spoke were scholars." The significant thing about this was the fact that the speaker—J. M. R. Weaver—had never been to higher schools of learning but was self-educated in the school of Christ. That was true of other speakers; they spoke with "power and authority."

J. B. Smith, D. H. Bender, J. D. Charles, S. M. Kanagy, M. D. Landis and A. E. Kreider spoke on various occasions, besides a host of laymen.

The programs have varied much in their order and content. They have covered not only all phases of Sunday School work but of the home, church, and community, of lesson material, lesson preparation, order, reverence, methods, singing, sociability, courtesy, literature, temperance, missions, giving, and Christian experience. Special stress upon the spiritual—personal consecration, fullness of the Spirit, and God's glory—has been emphasized. Special music has had a large place. Quite noticeable is the attention given to children in earlier years, speakers often referring to responsibilities toward them. They were given a part on the program. Talks were given them, often by some mother. Thus they were taught "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and many found Him and went out into active service.

The years have brought changes in the personnel, type of program and attendance. Fewer attend, the programs are shorter, with three or four subjects and not the large scope of material covered. Then practically every one was used—man or woman, young or old, learned or unlearned. The Sunday School believed in the exercise and development of each pupil and every one was asked to serve in some capacity or other. Latent powers were used and freedom of expression given. Open discussion or testimony brought ready response. In contrast, this is seldom called for today and the response is not so prompt. Then, "home-talent" was used; now, outside speakers are often called. A college in the community has given many speakers, given new types of subjects, and higher intellectual standards.

It is exceedingly difficult to condense on paper what a hundred and eighty-six meetings in forty-five years have brought to a church and community. Even the Quarterly reports before us fail to give the spirit and influence of those meetings. Eternity alone can measure the results. Briefly, they are these: exercise and development of talent; better methods of organization; enlarged vision; increased activity; deepened spirituality and influence upon surrounding churches. Besides these, there are in tangible results: four Mission Sunday schools, for longer or shorter periods of time, and monthly missionary meetings. Teachers' meetings, a Sunday School library, a Mission secretary, a church correspondent, maps and geographical reviews, and a separate primary department have all had their beginning in these quarterly conferences. We give God all the glory for what has been done.

Kansas Mennonites in 1890 and 1936

MELVIN GINGERICH

In 1891 the United States Census Office reported that the "Mennonites and Dunkards have never been fully numbered before." A few of the branches of the Mennonites had made reports, but most of them, reported the Superintendent of the Census, "appear in statistical tables for the first time in the census of 1890."

In 1890 Old Mennonites were living in Brown, Cherokee, Harper, Harvey, Johnson, McPherson, Marion, Nemaha, Ness, Osborne, Saline, Sherman, and Reno counties. There were altogether twenty organizations, five church edifices, and 513 members. The largest settlement was in McPherson County, although Harvey County with a membership of only 43 had the highest value placed on its church building, a figure of \$1,100.

The Amish Mennonites had twelve organizations, in ten counties, with a membership of 291. The Old Order Amish had three churches in Reno County, with a membership of 145. These three branches, therefore, had thirty-five church organizations, according to these government statistics. In 1944, they had nineteen churches, with the Old Order Amish accounting for six of these organizations. What has happened to these many small churches scattered through the state of Kansas is a topic that merits careful study.

In 1890, as is true now, the General Conference Mennonite Church had the largest numbers of any Mennonite group in Kansas. They had fourteen church organizations with 2,547 members. The Church of God in Christ had six churches with 274 members; the Mennonite Brethren, five churches with 685 members; the Defenceless Mennonites, one church with 132 members; and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, one church with 25 members. Thus, there were a total of 4,612 Mennonites in Kansas in 1890.

In the 1936 Census, one learns that the Mennonite population of Kansas has more than tripled in 46 years. According to the figures of that year, there were 14,036 members in 79 Kansas Mennonite churches. Below are given these figures in a tabulated form.

Kansas Mennonites in 1936

	No.	Congs.	Membership
Church of God in Christ	9	1324	
General Conference Mennonites	36	8616	
Krimmer Mennonite Brethren	4	594	
Mennonite Brethren	10	1716	
Mennonite Church	14	1431	
Old Order Amish	6	355	

John Umble, Goshen, Indiana, is writing a series of articles in the current issues of "The Mennonite Quarterly Review" entitled, "Extinct Mennonite Churches in Ohio."

The First Half Century of the Catlin Church Peabody, Kansas

LAURENCE HORST

In 1873, the Henry Hornberger family came from Pennsylvania and settled near Peabody, Kansas. They were the first Mennonite family to locate in this community. The farm Brother Hornberger purchased is located three miles north and one mile west of Peabody.

The first birshop to serve the Peabody church was Brother Daniel Brundage, who came this same year from Morgan County, Missouri. His home was near the Spring Valley Church at Canton, Kansas. At this time there was a community Sunday School conducted in a schoolhouse one mile north of the Hornberger home. The family attended this weekly service regularly.

Brother Evers, the first minister to serve the Catlin Church, moved his family to Peabody from Virginia in 1874. E. C. Weaver moved to Peabody from Missouri in 1875 and located across the road from the school just mentioned. This school became known as the Weaver School and still retains this name. Brother Weaver served the church as deacon. This same year Daniel Wismer chose to move to Peabody, when he came to the States from Canada. He was ordained bishop of the congregation and served until he and his family moved back to Canada. In 1876, the Ben Snyder family and Philip Deerist followed Wismer's example and came to this community from Canada too.

It was about this time when monthly Sunday services were held in four places, making one available service each Sunday. The Sunday services were held in the following places in their turn: Canton, Kansas; Canada, Kansas; Marion, Kansas; and the Weaver schoolhouse. The community Sunday school still functioned each Sunday morning and the Mennonites now had monthly services at Weaver in the afternoon. At Marion lived Old Noah Good in a type of dugout and the Marion services were held in the Good schoolhouse.

Ben Bare and Emanuel Shupe, two young men who came to Kansas from the east, supposedly seeking adventure and romance, married daughters of Noah Good. Brother Bare and his bride homesteaded a farm just one mile south of the parental home; while Emanuel Shupe and his bride homesteaded a farm approximately one mile north of the parental home. The parental home was three miles southeast of Marion. Jorn Barnes, who married a Lehman girl, was also located near the Noah Good home.

The monthly services in the Good school house were continuous until through the course of years their need was terminated by the moving of these families to other locations.

From Franklin County, Pennsylvania,

the Joseph Dohner family came to Peabody in 1877. John Newcomer, his wife and two children, Harry and Elizabeth, came from Cumberland County, Pennsylvania in 1878 and lived just one mile south-east of where the present church now stands. Samuel Cockley and family moved from Pennsylvania in 1883. Brother Cockley, now deceased, served often as chorister, teacher, and Sunday school superintendent. The John Shelly family from Juniata County, Pennsylvania, came to the community in 1884.

The following year, 1885, found four families moving to Peabody: John Erb, Harry Gish, and L. L. Beck with their families from Pennsylvania, and Joel Good's from Cass County, Missouri. Brother Isaac Good, son of Joel, married Elizabeth Geyser, who came into our church from the Evangelical Church. They built their home near the church and have served the Peabody church very splendidly in various capacities of church work. Brother Charles Good, another son of Joel, married Katherine Winey and they too have been loyal supporters of the church with the exception of a period of time spent in New Mexico.

From Cherokee County, Kansas, in 1886, came Ben F. Hamilton, a minister, and settled one and one-half miles southwest of the present church location. He probably lived in a greater number of States than most of us would think of living in. The following account is taken from old records. B. F. Hamilton was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1825. When he was two years old he came with his parents to Allentown, Pennsylvania where he grew to manhood. At the age of eighteen he accompanied his parents to Medina County, Ohio. In 1865 he moved to Indiana and was ordained to the ministry two years later. The year following his ordination he moved to Illinois and preached in this place until in 1883 when he moved to Cheokee County, Kansas. He had yet one more move ahead, which took him to Peabody three years later. At this place he was ordained a bishop and served until his death in May, 1898.

At this time services were being held in the Weaver schoolhouse with the monthly service in the Good schoolhouse at Marion. Many felt the need of a house to be dedicated to God—a house that could be called their own. Each member gave what he could and then the community was solicited for funds. In 1886 the community cemetery plot of some two acres was purchased, and here the new church house was erected with an initial cost of \$1500. The exact location is one mile west of Peabody and three and one-half miles north. The building was made twenty-eight by forty-four feet with the long side toward the road. The pulpit was the old-fashioned style—high and long. Kerosene lamps were set in brackets located periodically around the room with two back of the pulpit. The building was well constructed as can be evidenced by its firm appearance after fifty-six years of use.

The official name which the church took and has retained since is "Catlin Mennon-

ite", the "Catlin" being derived from the township in which it is located.

Two other ministers came to the church in 1888. They were Caleb Winey who came from Osborn County, Kansas, where he had been serving in this capacity, and Jacob Winey, a young man from Pennsylvania, who was ordained to preach at the Catlin Church. Two of Brother Caleb Winey's family, Mrs. Harry Newcomer and Mrs. Charles Good, are still living in the community.

A mark of progress is noted by the organization of a Sunday school department in 1889. Brother Abraham Kauffman, a recent arrival from Pennsylvania, was elected as the first Sunday school superintendent. He was also the first church chorister.

As there were many moving to Peabody, so occasionally families would be going elsewhere. Consequently, in 1895 the church was without a deacon. This need was presented to the Throne of Grace and Brother L. L. Beck was chosen by lot. Brother Beck was the first deacon to be ordained in the Catlin Church. He has shouldered his responsibility nobly as a devout, sincere Christian and is at the present time (1942) still serving the church.

It was in 1899 that Minister M. E. Horst moved to Peabody. Brother M. E. Horst was born near Maugansville, Maryland, on January 8, 1854. It was not until 1888 that he with his family moved to Harvey County, Kansas. Most of his life he was a farmer. He was ordained to the ministry in 1890 at the Pennsylvania Church. Here he labored faithfully until 1899 at which time he moved to Peabody and preached for the Catlin church. Brother Horst and his wife passed from this life in the winter of 1915, just five days apart. His body is resting in the cemetery adjoining the church.

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BISHOPS AND MINISTERS OF THE CATLIN CHURCH, PEABODY, KANSAS

BY LAURENCE HORST AND
GRACE EICHELBERGER

Number I: Bishops of the Catlin Church.

(1) Daniel Brundage—Brother Brundage came from Morgan County, Mo. in 1873, and located near the Spring Valley congregation in McPherson County, Kansas. He had oversight of the Spring Valley, West Liberty, Catlin and Pennsylvania congregations.

(2) Daniel Wismer—Brother Wismer was the next bishop to have oversight of the four congregations, which were mentioned before. He came from Canada and later returned to this place.

(3) B. F. Hamilton—Brother Hamilton had charge of these congregations until he passed away in 1898.

(4) D. H. Bender—Brother Bender was bishop for several years.

(5) T. M. Erb—Brother Erb was the bishop at the time of his passing in 1928.

(6) Harry Diener—Brother Diener served the church following Bro. Erb's death for a number of years.

(7) Milo Kauffman—Brother Kauffman is the present bishop of the Catlin Church (1942).

Number II. Ministers of the Catlin Church.

(1) John Evers—Brother Evers was the first minister of this church. He came to Peabody from Harrisonburg, Virginia in 1874. He had been ordained in 1872 at the Pike Church. Until death claimed him, he faithfully served the Catlin Church.

(2) Henry Hornberger—Brother Hornberger came to Peabody in the year 1873 from Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. He was ordained a minister in 1876. About the year 1884, he left the Mennonite church and united with the River Brethren.

(3) B. F. Hamilton—Brother Hamilton was a minister when he moved to Peabody from Cherokee County, Kansas, in 1886. Soon after his arrival at Peabody, he was ordained a bishop.

(4) Caleb Winey—Brother Winey was born near Richfield, Juniata County, Pennsylvania on February 24, 1849. He was ordained to the ministry in Osborne County, Kansas, by Bishop Henry Yoder from Blue Springs, Nebraska. Brother Winey preached at this place until he came to Peabody in 1888. His labor was spent for the Catlin congregation until in the year 1926, when he was paralyzed so that he was unable to walk.

(5) Jacob Winey—Brother Winey was born near Richfield, Pennsylvania on January 8, 1861. He came to Kansas in his boyhood days and worked near Peabody. In 1887, he was ordained to the ministry at the Catlin church. After this he went to Pennsylvania and married; he soon came back and served his people until 1895 when he moved to Jackson County, Kansas.

(6) L. O. King—Brother King came to Peabody, Kansas, from Manchester, Oklahoma, December 22, 1910. He preached for the congregation until the fall of 1918 when he moved to Hesston, Kansas.

(7) J. F. Brunk—Brother Brunk spent much of his life starting various mission stations. In 1915 he moved to Peabody and was active in the ministry for the next ten or fifteen years.

(8) Noah E. Ebersole—Brother Ebersole was born in Sterling, Illinois, on September 30, 1875. He was ordained to the ministry at Roseland, Nebraska, in 1901. In July, 1923, he located at Peabody and has been faithfully preaching for this congregation since that time. (1942).

(9) Laurence Horst—Brother Horst was ordained to the ministry in May 1936, when only twenty years of age.

April 9, 1911, ten persons were received by letter. They were Brother and Sister H. E. Massel, Brother and Sister Samuel Buckwalter, Brother and Sister Harve Evers, Brother and Sister Ephraim Risser, and Minister L. O. King and wife. Massels, Buckwalters, and Risers came from Harvey County, Kansas; Evers from Johnson County, Pennsylvania, and Kings came from Manchester, Oklahoma.

Brother Harry Selzer was received by letter November 12, 1913, and lived here many years with his wife Edna (Beck) Selzer, until they moved to Canton, Kans.

NEWS & NOTES

The hymns of the South Dakota Hutterites have been recorded recently by Dr. Marcus Bach of the School of Religion, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

The Bethel College Historical Library now has for rent over 1000 slides, covering the following fields: Stories of the Bible, Story of Christianity, and Story of the Mennonites. The three sets now available on the Mennonites are the Mennonites of Switzerland, The Mennonites of Holland, and The Amish Mennonites. All the slides are in the 2 x 2 inch size. Lectures accompany the sets. The rental per set is \$3.00. They may be obtained from the Bethel College Slide Service, North Newton, Kansas.

The *Musical Quarterly* of July, 1945, carried an article by George Pullen Jackson on "The Strange Music of the Old Order Amish." The statement was made that the "Amish still sing in America a direct offspring-tune of the song which, in various guises, is now at least 1100 years old."

Mennonite Life is the name of a new publication, the first issue of which appeared in early December. It is a semi-annual illustrated magazine presenting Mennonite life "as it is, and as it should be." The editor is Cornelius Krahn and the associate editors are C. Henry Smith, Abram Warkentin, Melvin Gingerich, and J. Winfield Fretz. A list of over forty contributors contains the names of the leading writers of most of the Mennonite branches in America. The paper can be ordered for a year by sending one dollar to Mennonite Life, North Newton, Kansas.

A large picture of a member of the Old Order Amish Mennonite Church appeared on the front cover of the November 28, 1945, *Pathfinder*.

The congregation's first trustees were appointed on September 5, 1910. I. S. Good, chairman, was elected for a term of three years; Sam Cockley, secretary, for a term of two years; and L. L. Beck, treasurer, for a term of one year. Business meeting is held the last Tuesday in September of each year. Each year a new member is elected on the board of trustees to serve a term of three years.

On March 20, 1921 Brother Thomas Eason and his wife were received by baptism. They with their four children, enjoyed fellowship here until they moved to Winton, California. Brother Clyde Fenton and family came to spend a time here in 1922-23. In July of 1923, Minister N. E. Ebersole was received by letter from the Protection, Kansas, congregation. Brother Ebersole has been a faithful servant for the Catlin church since that time.

RECENT BOOKS

Thirty-Five Years in the Congo. By William B. Weaver. (Congo Inland Mission, 1326 West 72nd Street, Chicago 36, Illinois, 1945. 241 pp. Illustrations and bibliography. \$1.25.)

After thirty-five years of labor in the African Congo, the Congo Inland Mission, representing the Central Conference of Mennonites, the Defenceless Mennonites, and other Mennonite groups, has four main stations, thirty-five missionaries under appointment, and a "growing church of eleven thousand four hundred fifty-eight native Christians."

This book is a history of the beginnings and the growth of the Congo Inland Mission by one who has been a member of its Board since 1927 and who has spent a considerable period of time acquainting himself with the story of this mission enterprise. William B. Weaver has not only an intellectual interest in his subject but also a deep spiritual interest in the program of evangelism, as is evidenced in every chapter of the book. This volume, therefore, will be of great value to any mission study class which wishes not only to have the story of particular missions but also wishes to catch the vision and fervor which motivate successful missionaries.

In addition to the story of the Congo Inland Mission, one finds in this volume the larger picture of missionary activity in the heart of Africa, the story of Livingstone and Stanley, a description of the native religions, a chapter on the reasons for missions, and many illustrations showing the workers and the mission stations.

The chapter on "The Congo Inland Mission, A Co-operative Program" is an illuminating one. The author explains how four Mennonite branches have succeeded in formulating a program under which all can participate in the work of the Congo Inland Mission. The final chapter is entitled, "What Hath God Wrought". Perhaps no other Mennonite missionary enterprise has been as successful as this one, if one may judge by the growth of the native church. Mr. Weaver writes, "Possibly never in the history of any of the present generation of Mennonites has such a revival and ingathering of souls into the kingdom occurred within our ranks as has been going on in our mission in Africa in the past few years. In January, 1932, the Church in the mission numbered six hundred, and on January 1, 1934, it numbered over three thousand with another more than three thousand confessed believers who were receiving instruction prior to baptism. The Lord had in a marvelous manner shown His approval of the efforts put forth and used their feeble efforts to bring glory to His Holy Name."

Melvin Gingerich

